

Sovereign Hill Education

A Main Street Meander

A Self-Guided trail for Primary Students

Name

Year

It is recommended that students plot this trail on the map before starting.



Clarke Brothers' Store

In the goldrush days of the 1850s, the general store supplied most of the diggers' needs. It carried a wide range of goods from cheese, pickles and tea to buckets, picks and other simple mining equipment.

Clarke Brothers' Store was opened in Ballarat in 1857, and was owned and run by Thomas and Richard Clarke. Sovereign Hill's replica is rich with the atmosphere of early Ballarat stores.

- 1 Identify as many different goods as you can by using your sense of smell. (Take particular note of the coffee grinding machine. Clarke Brothers were well known coffee merchants.)

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- 2 Find and then look carefully at the following goods: snuff, clay pipes, spice containers, cereal bins, lamp glasses, hen feather dusters, colza oil containers, beeswax, sticky fly paper, blue bags, pokes or paper twists used as lolly wrappings, cheeses and the cheese slicer, hams, tobacco leaves, leather buckets, emu eggs and feathers.

- 3 The old sawdust used to cover the floorboards was mixed with kerosene and applied daily. How would this aid cleanliness?

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- 4 Look at the symbol of the coffee pot on the outside of the shop. What did this tell the customers?

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- 5 Why wasn't the written sign enough to indicate that the store sold groceries? (Who could read it?)

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- 6 How could Clarke's Grocery advertise its wares?

a

b

c

What might happen to goods displayed outside the shop?

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- 7 Compare the 1850s packaging and presentation of goods with those of modern times. List 3 differences.

a

b

c

- 8 Compare and contrast 1850s and modern grocery shopping

Similarities:

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Differences:

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The Post Office

The Gold Rush caused a sudden population increase and Ballarat lacked a suitable postal system. The first Post Office operated from Adams' Store very near Sovereign Hill and was followed by a tent Post Office which opened for business in the main street. This was unsatisfactory and was replaced by the wooden building represented here at Sovereign Hill. This Post Office has been copied from a sketch made by goldfields artist, S.T. Gill, in 1854.

In 1854, a mail service operated twice weekly from Ballarat to Melbourne and Geelong. Mail from America was unreliable, but it came regularly from England and took about three months to reach Ballarat.

Home delivery did not exist in 1854 and lists of mail ready for collection were placed on billboards outside the Post Office or printed in local newspapers. Newspapers also reported brawls and fights amongst hot-tempered diggers who crowded at the Post Office window to collect mail.

1 Why was the Post Office such an important place?

2 Why did people lose their tempers when picking up and mailing letters?

3 Why were street deliveries of mail impossible?

4 Look at the public notice board outside the Post Office. Read some of the notices. How do we get similar messages to people today?

Copy your favourite message in your own words.

5 The Postmaster lived at the back of the Post Office. Why?

6 Look at the Postmaster's house and furniture. What could you say about his job and wage compared with that of a digger?

7 Why would the Postmaster be paid so well? What qualifications would he need?

8 Look in the kitchen. Where would they obtain their water?

9 Where is the family toilet?



Robinson and Wayne's Apothecaries' Hall

This weatherboard building is based on a drawing made by the French artist François Cogné in 1859. Like the original, the replica at Sovereign Hill carries the mortar and pestle symbol on the roof indicating that the occupants of the shop were apothecaries. The apothecary was like today's chemist or pharmacist, but his Apothecary's Certificate also licensed him to practise medicine and dentistry.

The apothecary prepared many concoctions according to special recipes. He made pills, medicines, headache powders, ointments, beauty aids, insecticides and toiletries such as soaps, toiletwaters, lotions and lavender bags.

The apothecary also made veterinary products like worm and distemper powders, mange lotions for dogs and balms for saddle sores on horses. He was also the expert on preserving food stuffs and on the use of herb and spices. Rhubarb juice (note the beautiful rhubarb jar) was used to bind together dry, powdered ingredients to make pills. Also to be seen is a leech jar. Bleeding by leeches was still a popular form of treatment.

- 1 List some causes of ill health amongst diggers.

a

b

c

- 2 Given that the Victorians often believed that ill health resulted from bad airs or "vapours", why do you think that perfumes, lavender bags, soaps and pomanders were so popular?

- 3 What do you regard as the main difference between the apothecary and a modern-day pharmacist?

- 4 Leeches were a popular cure. A patient could purchase a leech to help cure a headache. How would they have been used? What does the cure tell us about the Victorian understanding of the cause of headaches?

- 5 Operations were often carried out in a special tent outside the building. Why?

- 6 What is the symbol on the roof representing? (Re-read the introduction for help.)

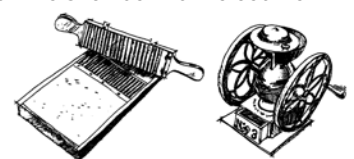
A m and p

Draw it.

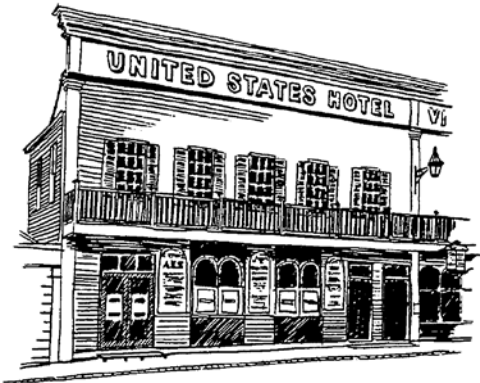
What is it used for?

- 7 Examine the equipment on the shelf behind the counter.

- Look at
a the pill maker
b the drug mill



Why isn't this sort of equipment needed in modern times?



United States Hotel

In December 1855, the original United States Hotel was burnt down. A new hotel was opened for business by the New Year, 1856, only fifteen days after construction started. Sovereign Hill's replica is copied from a drawing by François Cogné in 1859.

The hotel was a crowded, noisy place where diggers met at the end of a long day to exchange tales, attend social and political meetings, or to play billiards and bagatelle. It provided simple food and simple accommodation for up to eighty people. Iced drinks were available although there was no refrigeration. The ice came from Lake Wenham (near Boston, USA) which froze early in the North American winter. The ice was packed in sawdust and stored in the hulls of ships bound for Australia. When they reached Geelong, the ice was carted by bullock drays to Ballarat. Because of this long and costly journey, the diggers paid extra for ice in their drinks and ice was often re-used from glass to glass.

1 Why were there few or no seats in the bars?

2 Why were hotels so popular?

3 What does the name of the hotel suggest to you?

4 Why is the building very simple in design?

5 Where were drinks stored to keep them cool in the hot weather?



Victoria Theatre

The Victoria Theatre, like the United States Hotel, is weatherboard. Like other buildings of the era, however, it reflects Victorian taste in its lavish decorations. (Note the mock marble columns and the elaborately decorated balcony.) The Sovereign Hill copy is taken from a drawing by François Cogné and is much smaller than the original which was claimed to be the largest theatre in the colony outside Melbourne.

Theatre tickets cost from one shilling (10 cents) to half-a-crown (25 cents). These entitled patrons to anything from standing room only to the best balcony seat. The theatre was usually crowded and noisy. Entertainment varied from Shakespearian plays and lectures to vaudeville (magicians, musicians, acrobats) and melodramas. Dancing often finished off the night's entertainment. The scenery was usually a painted canvas. Mechanical tricks were used to move the scenery, to make actors disappear or to create weather effects. Heavy stage make-up was also used because of the distance between the stage and the audience. Gas lighting did not give strong spot lighting on the stage.

- 1 List some of the factors which contributed to a high level of audience noise.

- 2 Why were seats of the bench type?

- 3 List three ways in which an 1850s show was advertised compared with show today.

1850s

a

b

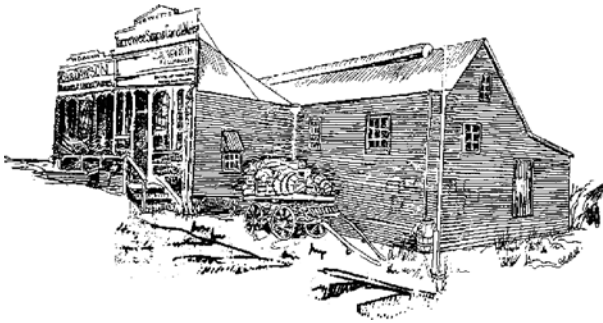
c

Modern

a

b

c



Yarrowee Soap and Candle Works

Soap and candle-making were important trades in the 1850s. This sort of factory was often on the outskirts of town near the tannery and knackery because all were fairly smelly businesses.

- 1 Why was this factory important in the 1850s?

- 2 Look around. What was the main ingredient of soap and candles?

This substance was made from animal fat.

- 3 How did hanging candles from the ceiling help overcome the problem of vermin (rats and mice)?

- 4 What were the disadvantages of using candles as a source of light?

- 5 Step outside. What is Mr Jungwirth's trade? What do you think this occupation is all about?

